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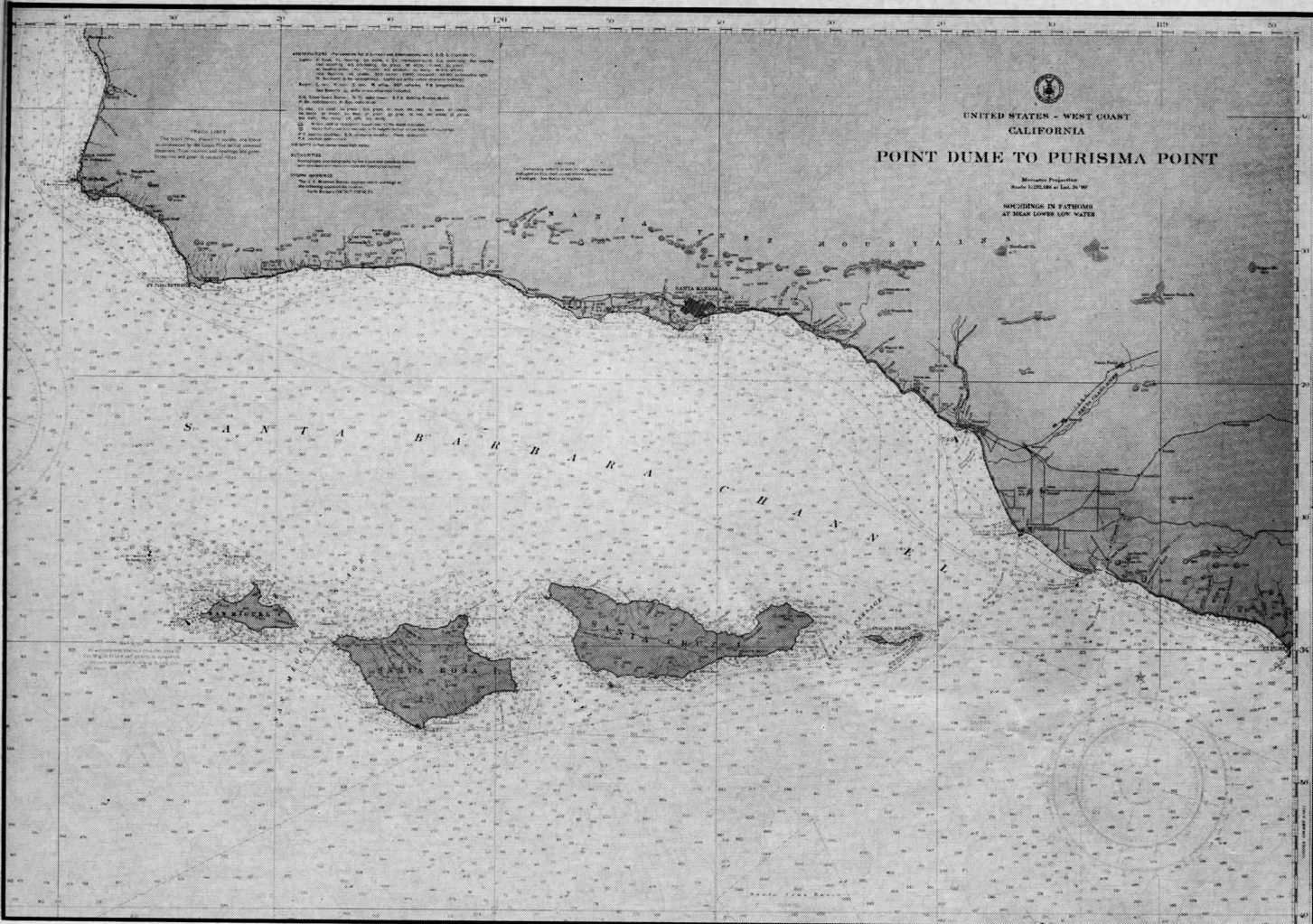
50 cents

The Pacific  
is her playground

See Page 5







## Cruising the Offshore Islands

### Part II—The CHANNEL ISLANDS

By STEWART ROBERTSON

**Editor's Note**—It is a remarkable fact that the Channel Islands are so little known and so infrequently visited by yachtsmen along the California coast. Perhaps it is because of the great popularity of Santa Catalina Island. One can hardly blame the sail or cruiser owner for enjoying the Isthmus and its coves, tucked full each week end with the same people doing the same thing.

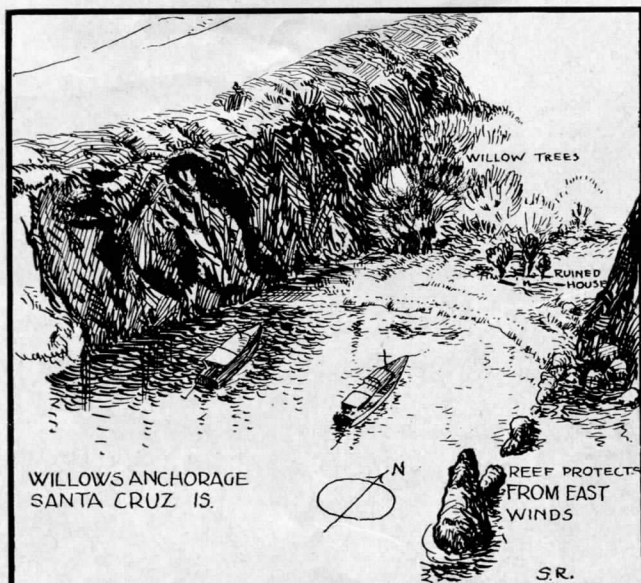
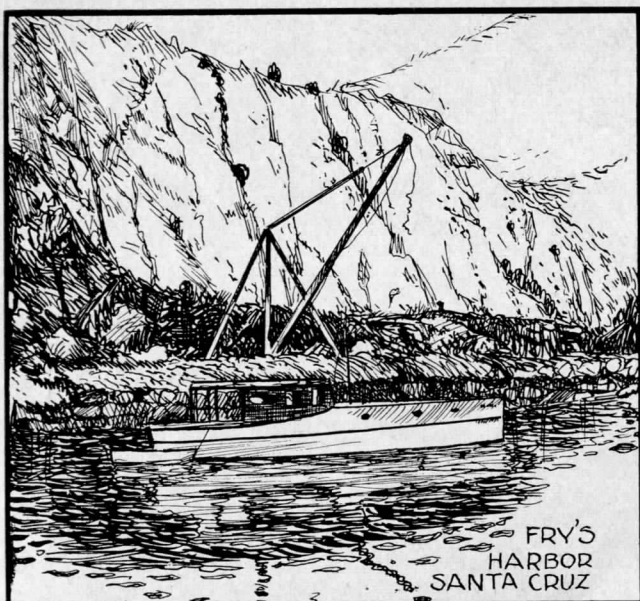
But some Sunday, as you are enjoying the run home with the wind on your quarter, give a thought to the islands to windward. As the island fades into pastel colors, as it has done so many times before, you'll hesitate to give up even one week end on the Catalina Channel. But try one—in fact, give yourself a week for a cruise to the Santa Barbara Channel Islands.

It is not recommended during the winter when a southeasterly "buster" may come along. But in the summer you have a channel stretching 63 miles from Point Hueneme to Point Conception to explore. As the lines form out of the haze, you'll strain for the Isthmus or Avalon, but what you'll see will be Anacapa or Santa Cruz or Santa Rosa . . . a new island to windward.

ONE could spend an entire summer cruising the Channel Islands. They are a continuation of the Santa Monica range of mountains and have a wild beauty of their own when seen from the deck of a small boat. They are located in an area where the winds blow strong, much stronger than in the Catalina Channel.

This is because the prevailing wind north of Point Conception is northwest and is deflected seaward by the Tehachapi Mountains. Strong winds are common at this Point; indeed the Coast Pilot calls Conception the Cape Horn of the Pacific. The strongest winds sweep west of San Miguel Island, but the others feel them to a lesser degree. These islands are not intended for the voyager with a small or open boat; but to the seaman they are a pleasant cruising ground.

The Coast and Geodetic Survey Charts 5202, 5114, 5115 and 5116 lay out the area in detail. You can fol-



low the coast line from San Diego or the Los Angeles area to Point Dume for a starter. This dreadful sounding name is really pronounced "du may" although locally called "doom." It was named for one of the padres of the San Fernando Mission. The explorer Vancouver had been hospitably entertained there and gave the good father this lasting tribute. In fact, Points Vicente and Fermin were also named for padres at this mission.

In the lee of Point Dume is Paradise Cove which you can enter if you choose. You should line up with the axis of the pier before entering through the kelp, for the party boat owners keep this passage open. There is sometimes quite a surge, but the breakwater of kelp keeps this to a minimum.

From there you can jump off to the Anacapas, sentinels at the eastern approach to the Santa Barbara Channel. Or, if you desire, you can continue up the coast to Port Hueneme before making this move. Hueneme is the last place to purchase gas which is un-

obtainable at the islands. It is a guided missile center and partly restricted. Vessels may stop overnight, but longer stays (except in emergency) are not invited.

Anacapa is really a chain of three small islands extending four and a half miles from east to west. They are a weird remnant of a mountain peak rising from the ocean floor. The most powerful light on the Pacific Coast is situated at the eastern end, with a visibility of 23 miles from a height 15 feet above sea level. It is wise to make allowance for the strong current that flows eastward between the mainland and Anacapa, for it can throw you off your course.

There is a peak 930 feet high on the westernmost island that can be seen for 35 nautical miles in clear weather. The perpendicular sides emerge from deep water, with the base honeycombed into caves by the sea. The shores abound in kelp, so it is unsafe to approach the island in thick weather.

The easternmost anchorage is East Fish Camp Cove, about a mile and a one half west of the east end on the south side of the middle island. There you will see the remains of crude stone huts used by fishermen in the lobster season. The island is a national monument and is for public use (if you can find a place to land). Except for the families of the Coastguardsmen who tend the radio beacon and light, the island is uninhabited. Water has to be hauled from the mainland and stored in tanks at the lighthouse. There is another anchorage at Cat Rock which is unmistakable. The island is ever changing. Fifty caves were recently mapped on the Anacapas where only four had been recorded previously.

The passage between Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands is about three miles wide. In the afternoons a considerable sea makes up, and with the southeast current one would be well advised to make the crossing in the morning. The light on the eastern end of Santa Cruz is Smugglers Cove. The anchorage does not have very good holding ground, for it has a rocky bottom. Strong winds sometimes sweep down from the little valley on shore. When the wind drops the tide takes over; so you must allow enough room to swing without hitting the beach. The surge makes landing difficult among the large boulders that line the shore.





Around San Pedro Point come several small anchorages, all protected from the prevailing northwest winds, with fantastic names like Scorpion Anchorage, Hungryman Gulch and Potato Harbor. The last named is the rendezvous for the Los Angeles Power Squadron during their annual summer cruise.

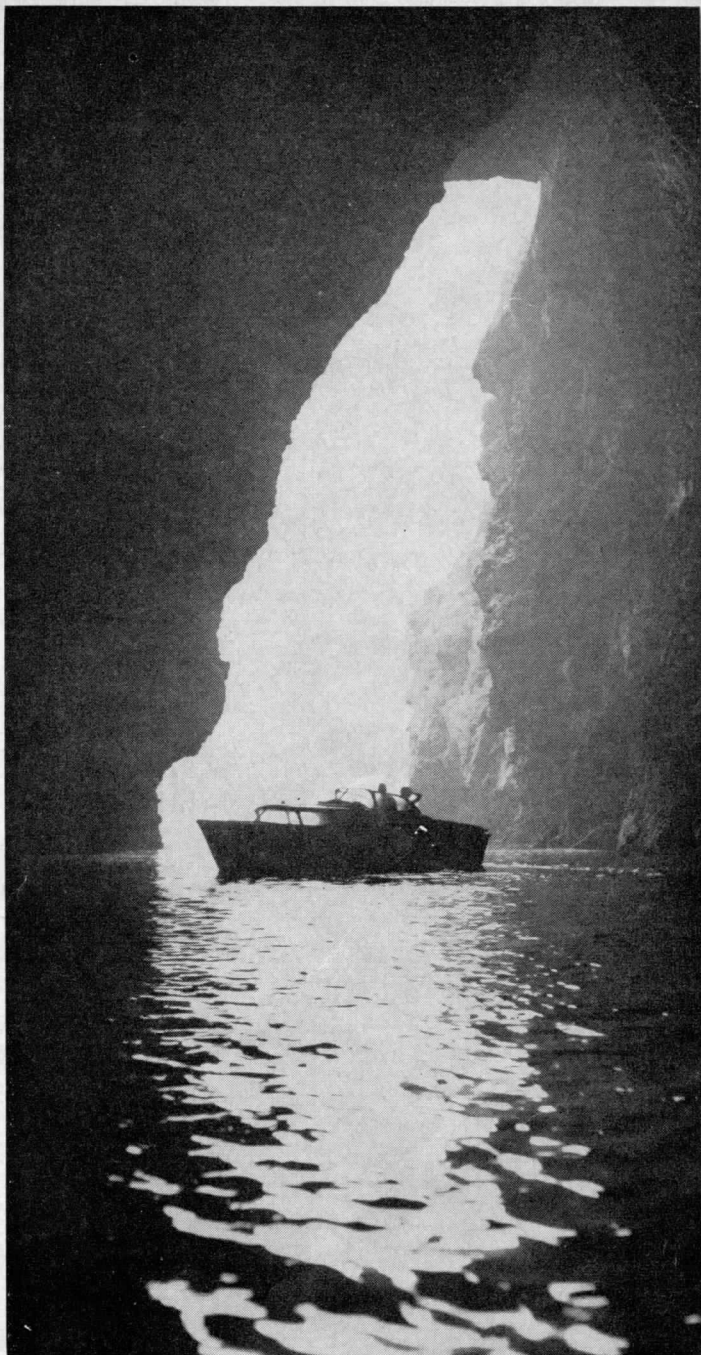
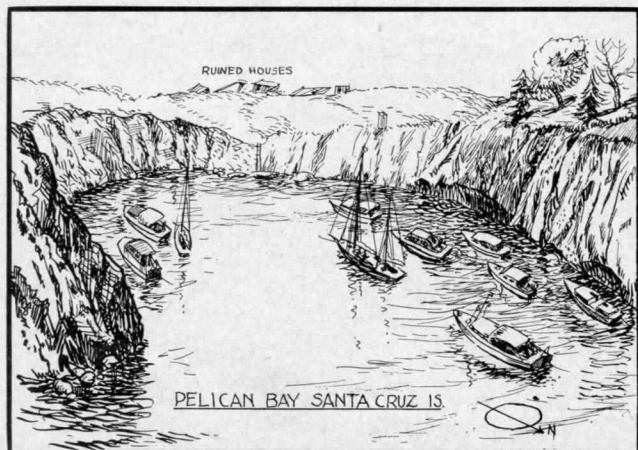
Farther west is Prisoner's Harbor. It got its name because the early Mexican government used to dump lawbreakers there, leaving them to fend for themselves as best they could. The pier that serves the island is located in the exposed anchorage. But just around the point is the well-protected harbor of Pelican Bay. Sometimes a swell comes around the corner to make the spot a mite uncomfortable, but it is a good anchorage. Coming from Santa Barbara you will always find it, for it lies between twin peaks silhouetted against the sky.

Santa Cruz is privately owned and landing is not permitted without express permission from the owner. Hunting is not allowed nor are firearms permitted. In the past, "sportsmen" have taken potshots at the sheep and in early days the bay was the headquarters for those who hunted wild boar.

One of the snuggest coves on the north shore is Lady's. If you come from the west end you will pass it almost before it opens into view, for it is only a narrow canyon in the cliffs. If there are more than four or five vessels the anchorage is crowded; and it is best to set your stern anchor almost on the beach with the kedge towards the entrance.

Fry's is another good harbor but it, too, has strong winds which sometimes blow from the valley behind it. A light anchor will not bite through the eel grass on the bottom. An old crane is a landmark at this anchorage. It was the stone quarry from which the rock for the core of the Santa Barbara breakwater was obtained. There are crypt-like caves at Valdez Cove which can sometimes have a pretty fair surge also.

Painted Cave is a must for visitors. A party from the University of Southern California laboratory ship *Velero III* conducted a survey on these coves which was printed in the January 1954 issue of *Sea*. The cave is about three miles east of the west end and can only be entered from seaward. The best time to explore is in the early morning when there is little surge. You



Painted Cave is a must for every yachtsman. It can arouse an atavistic urge, making you peer around for mastodons and saber-toothed tigers.

will need your dinghy; for the entrance gradually slopes downward to a narrow throat three feet high and six feet wide, depending on the tide. This entrance is well named for it is stained with iron and copper oxides and with the shimmering reflections from the water is very beautiful.

Passing through the narrow throat you find yourself in a vast cavern where the darkness seems solid. The roof is so high that only a powerful lantern can reach its confines. The sea lions which have inhabited the cave for centuries will probably begin to bark immediately, and the sound, which cannot escape, reverberates from wall to wall in ever-increasing crescendo. The noise brings to mind the fears our forefathers must have felt in the dens of the saber-toothed

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# Cruising the Channel Islands

(Continued from Page 37)

tigers and mastodons. About the time you decide to leave, the sea lions have the same idea, which leads to some overcrowding at the entrance.

Painted Cave is a good jumping off place for the city of Santa Barbara. The islands had a goodly number of visitors during the Semana Nautica. It is just as Dana described it in his "Two Years Before The Mast" over 100 years ago. The Santa Barbarans dress in California-Spanish costumes and the occasion is a joyous one. The harbor was the scene of the Southern California Yachting Association regatta this year and the terminus for a number of cruises from San Diego and Los Angeles.

Originally the breakwater was open at both ends, parallel to the shore. The tide flowing between the breakwater and the beach kept the harbor scoured. However, the breakwater was extended to shore, making it three sides of a square. Sand accreted at the western end until it was level with the seaward side of the breakwater. Then it crept grain by grain along the front and around the end until there was a sand-bank inside the breakwater at its entrance. The city keeps the sand under control by dredging, but you should keep the black buoys well on the port hand



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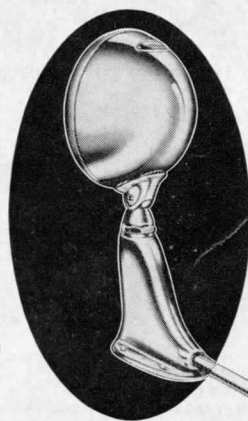
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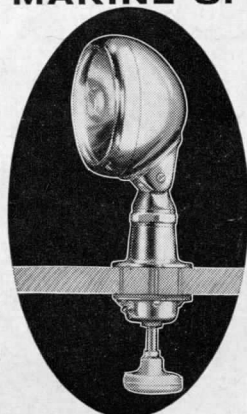
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